

CHAPTER I: SAN FRANCISCO BAY 1842-1849

A. American Occupation

As the 1840s unfolded, the possibility of war with Mexico became more evident in Washington's official circles. The United States considered the ramifications of annexing Texas while Mexico refused to pay its debts. The doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" (the possession of the continent with Providence's blessing) spread among the American people. In 1842 Commodore Thomas ap C. Jones prematurely seized Monterey, the Mexican capital of Alta California, when he mistakenly believed the United States and Mexico were at war. An embarrassed Jones promptly withdrew with profuse apologies when he learned of his error. But a fortuneteller could easily have predicted the near future as relations between the two nations grew worse.

On May 13, 1846, the United States declared war on Mexico. In early June Commodore John D. Sloat, commander of the U.S. Pacific Squadron, learned of the declaration and sailed for Monterey. American forces took possession of the capital on July 7, 1846. Two days later Commander John D. Montgomery, USS *Portsmouth*, landed Marines at Yerba Buena in San Francisco Bay.¹

Spanish forces had occupied San Francisco Bay in 1776, having discovered the magnificent harbor in 1769. Jose Joaquin Moraga arrived from the Presidio of Monterey with nearly 200 soldiers and settlers. On September 17, 1776, padres blessed the new Presidio of San Francisco. Located on the southern side of the bay, the presidio eventually consisted of a large enclosure of adobe walls. Barracks, officers' quarters, chapels, storerooms, and guardhouse, all of adobe, lined the walls and enclosed an open plaza. John Langellier describes a presidio as a military and civil complex, "derived from the Latin term *presidium*, a fortified or garrisoned place, the Spanish presidio acted as the advance guard of territorial settlement. In addition to its martial service, it provided the core of governmental, social, and economic activity in the region," At the time of the American conquest, four presidios protected Alta California: San Diego, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco.²

1. Theodore Grivas, *Military Governments in California, 1846-1850* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1963), pp. 41-45.

2. John P. Langellier and Daniel B. Rosen, *Historic Resource Study, El Presidio de San Francisco, A History under Spain and Mexico, 1776-1846* (Denver: National Park Service, 1992), p. 11. This is the definitive history of the Spanish/Mexican Presidio

A few years later the Spaniards completed a large battery, the Castillo de San Joaquin, at Punta del Cantil Blanco (White Cliffs; today's Fort Point), the prominent headland guarding the entrance to the bay and about one mile northwest of the Presidio. It consisted of an adobe and brick work with embrasures for a number of cannon. To the rear of the curved parapet was a wooden platform or esplanade on which the guns and their carriages stood. A barracks, sentry box, mess room, and powder magazine to the rear completed the work. The number of guns, mounted and dismounted, varied over the years, typical of such works in all armies.³

Spanish dominion in the New World collapsed in 1821 and Mexico assumed control of Alta California. Neglected by the new authorities, the presidios in Upper California declined greatly in the size of their garrisons and their armament. Finally, in 1835, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, commandant of the northern frontier, removed his troops from the Presidio to Sonoma north of the bay. He left Alferez Juan Prado Mesa and six artillerymen at the San Francisco Presidio. Later he withdrew even that remnant and Cpl. Joaquin Pena ("Pina") remained behind as custodian.⁴

When Lt. Charles Wilkes, U.S. Navy, commander of a naval scientific expedition to the South Seas, visited the Presidio in 1841, he wrote:

After passing the entrance, we were scarcely able to distinguish the Presidio; and had it not been for its solitary flag-staff, we could not have ascertained its situation. From this staff no flag floated; the building was deserted, the walls had fallen to decay, the guns were dismounted, and everything around it lay in quiet. We were not even saluted by the stentorian lungs of some soldier, so customary in Spanish places. . . . I afterwards learned that the Presidio was still a garrison in name, and that it had not been wholly abandoned; but the remnant of the troops stationed there consisted of no more than an officer and one soldier. I was not able to learn the rank of the former, as he was absent and appeared, at least among the foreigners, to be little known.⁵

(..continued)

of San Francisco. It sheds a bright light on the otherwise cloudy history of the presidio's first seventy years. Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio, Bastion of the Spanish Borderland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975) does not discuss coastal presidios in his otherwise excellent study.

3. Langelier, *El Presidio*, pp. 41-42, 57, and 99-100.

4. "Records of the Quartermaster Department, Presidio of San Francisco," p. 2, in National Park Service, *The Presidio of San Francisco, 1776-1976, A Collection of Historical Source Materials* (San Francisco, 1976, p. 32. Mesa Street at the Presidio was named in the lieutenant's honor.

5. Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition During the*

Thus, the Presidio and its defenses lay practically deserted when Sloat raised the Stars and Stripes over California's domain.

B. John Charles Fremont

Before the capture of Monterey another American, Lt. John Charles Fremont, U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, made his presence in California known to Mexican authorities. He had led an exploring expedition into California earlier, in 1844, and now with a party of sixty-two men arrived at Sutter's Fort (within Sacramento today) in December 1845. Before he had left the United States Fremont had received orders that should war have begun before he arrived, he was to change his mission from exploration to combat. Finding the country at peace, Fremont sought approval for his presence from Commandant Jose Castro at Monterey. Once he had acquired fresh horses and the necessary supplies, he declared, he would depart for the United States. When Castro directed him to leave the province at once, Fremont first decided to bluster a bit but changed his mind and headed toward the Oregon Country.

U.S. Marine Lt. Archibald Gillespie, recently arrived from the United States, caught up with Fremont, apparently with secret orders from Washington. Fremont turned around and retraced his steps southward. On learning that the castillo was deserted, or nearly so, Fremont decided to cross over and render its guns useless. He contacted William D. Phelps, captain of the American trading vessel *Moscow* anchored off Sausalito. Phelps lent him one of his boats for the endeavor. Describing the July 1, 1846, event many years later, Fremont wrote:

(..continued)

Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, 1844), 5:162-163. In 1848 the Presidio commanding officer wrote to the military governor of California concerning one "Pina," "an old Mexican soldier who had lived for many years at the Presidio . . . but who has lately been disposed of this residence there in consequence of the Government's requiring the house he occupied for officer's quarters. . . . He begs permission to pass his effects and cattle (they are but few) across the bay in a public launch." Monterey approved Pina's request and directed that the public launch transport the old man, his family, and effects across the bay. National Archives, Record Group 77, Office of the Chief of Engineers (hereinafter cited as NA, RG, OCE), Consolidated Correspondence File, Presidio of San Francisco, Maj. Charles A. Hardie, February 28, 1848, to Col. R.B. Mason, Governor of California; and Lt. William T. Sherman, Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters, Military Department, Monterey, March 9, 1848, to Capt. Joseph L. Folsom, Assistant Quartermaster, San Francisco.

Captain Hardie had offered Pina a house at the Mission but the old soldier declined. He said the Mexican government had done him wrong and he had not received pay for many years. He would like now to live at San Rafael.

I took with me twelve of my men singled out as the best shots. . . . The captain happened to have on board his ship a quantity of rattail files, with some of which we supplied ourselves. I had learned that little or no guard was maintained at the fort. . . . Pulling across the strait . . . we reached the Fort Point [a later name] in the gray dawn of morning and scrambled up the steep bank just in time to see several horsemen escaping at full speed toward Yerba Buena. We promptly spiked the guns – fourteen – nearly all long brass Spanish pieces. The work of spiking was effectually done by Stepp, who was a gunsmith.⁶

Captain Phelps maintained a diary in which he recorded the action:

I concluded it would be best to render what assistance I could. . . . Selecting a dozen of Butchers Steels [knife sharpeners that look like rattail files] from the trade room, a few hammers, hat chets and crowbars, the preparations were soon made and expecting some opposition about 20 men 6 of whom were Delawares [Indians], were selected and stowed away in the Launch and armed with Rifles and Pistols – the Delawares with tomahawks. Capt. Fremont requested me to accompany them as Pilot. Therefore I followed him and Mr. Gillespie into the boat and with a boats crew of my own men the compliment [sic] was about 26 persons. We returned to the Ship in less than two hours having accomplished all that was intended spiking 3 Brass and 7 Iron Guns without seeing a foe.⁷

Like Fremont, Phelps prepared his memoirs many years later. He wrote:

The boat was anchored about a quarter of a mile inside of Fort Point, just without the brakens. One of my men swam on shore with a rope, and the boat was hauled as near in as possible, when all but the boats crew were ordered to jump overboard and scramble on shore as best they could. Between the landing place and the fort a number of gullies or ravines intervened, over which I had to pick my way with some caution.⁸

Phelps did not reach the castillo until after the guns had been dismounted. Others in the party included Christopher (Kit) Carson, not yet an army officer, and Lieutenant Gillespie. As to the number of cannon the party spiked, there is some confusion. While Fremont counted fourteen in his memoirs, in a letter to his father-in-law, U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton, written soon after the event, he claimed only "six

6. John Charles Fremont, *Memoirs of My Life* (Chicago: Belford, Clark, 1887), pp. 525-526.

7. Briton Cooper Busch, editor, *Fremont's Private Navy, The 1846 Journal of Captain William Dane Phelps* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark, 1987), pp. 35-36.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 36, n. 14. Phelps later billed the U.S. government for \$10,000 for his trouble. A claims court awarded him \$50.

large and handsome pieces." A naval officer who visited the castillo soon after counted ten guns. Hubert Howe Bancroft, who derided Fremont in his histories, also settled on ten, saying that not one of them "offered the slightest resistance."⁹

Until the 1840s the entrance to San Francisco Bay had been called the "Boca del Puerto de San Francisco" (Entrance to the Port of San Francisco). Sometime in the 1840s, however, the entrance acquired a new name. In his memoirs, Fremont wrote about his publicity coup, "To this Gate I gave the name of *Chrysopylae*, or GOLDEN GATE; for the same reasons that the harbor of Byzantium (Constantinople afterwards) was called *Chrysoceras*, or GOLDEN HORN."¹⁰

Lieutenant Fremont went on to participate in more significant episodes in the acquisition of California. For a brief period – two months – he became the de facto governor of the newly-acquired province. In later years, California became his and Mrs. Fremont's home.¹¹

9. Allan Nevins, *Fremont, Pathfinder of the West*, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1939; reprinted 1961), 1:278; Mary Lee Spence and Donald Jackson, editors, *The Bear Flag Revolt and the Court Martial*, vol. 2 in *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 2:183; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California*, 5 vols. (San Francisco: History Company, 1886), 5:177 (Col.) Fred B. Rogers, "Fort Point, California," 1959, Thesis, MS, copy at the Fort Point and Presidio Historical Association, Presidio of San Francisco.

10. Fremont, *Memoirs*, p. 512. "Chrysopylae or Golden Gate" appeared on a map at least as early as 1848. See Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names, the Origins and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 116.

11. Born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1813, Fremont joined the Army as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838. He participated in or led exploration and mapping expeditions in the Mid and Far West – along the Oregon Trail, the Oregon Country, and California. In 1841 he married Jessie Benton, the daughter of politically-powerful U.S. Sen. Thomas Hart Benton. Historians debate his contributions to Western history, but he is generally regarded as an important explorer and mapmaker. Toward the end of the 1845-1846 California sojourn, Fremont received a court martial for disobedience and other charges and, although President James K. Polk suspended his sentence, he resigned from the Army. He lived in California acquiring large parcels of land and becoming rich during the gold rush. During this period he purchased a home at San Francisco's Black Point (later, Fort Mason) primarily for Jessie, who found ranch life lonesome. They lost this residence when the Army occupied Black Point during the Civil War.

In 1856 he ran for the presidency as the nominee of the new Republican party, losing to James Buchanan. At the beginning of the Civil War he returned to active duty with the rank of major general. His lack of success as a leader caused him to resign again, in 1862. He retired to California in 1864, eventually losing his wealth due to bankruptcies. He was restored to the rank of major general shortly before his death in 1890. Trevor N. Dupuy, Curt Johnson, and David L. Bongard, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 262-263.

C. Military Government

Commodore Sloat's appearance at Monterey on July 7, 1846, brought a swift end to the Bear Flaggers' hope for a California republic. Two weeks later he turned over command of the Pacific Squadron to Commodore Robert F. Stockton who arrived on USS *Congress*. Determined to bring all California under the sovereignty of the United States, he named himself temporary governor. In December 1846 Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny, marching overland from his victory at Santa Fe, arrived in California. Feuding with Stockton (which led to the arrest and court martial of Fremont), Kearny arrived at Monterey in February 1847. Stockton had already departed the port and his naval successors recognized Kearny as the commanding officer of American forces in California. He took charge as governor on February 9 and established a stable military government.

D. Yerba Buena

When Comdr. John D. Montgomery arrived at San Francisco Bay in July 1846, he dispatched a message to William A. Leidesdorf, the American vice-consul and the leading merchant in the hamlet of Yerba Buena:

July 8, 1846: At ½ past seven o'clock to morrow morning I propose landing a considerable body of men under arms. And to march them from the boats to the flag staff in Yerba Buena, upon which at 8 o'clock, I shall hoist the Flag of the U States under a salute of twenty one guns from the Portsmouth. After which, the Proclamation of the Commander in Chief [sic] Commander Sloat will be read in both languages for the enformation [sic] of all classes.¹²

True to Montgomery's word, Lt. Paul W. Revere, USN, landed with seventy sailors and Marines on July 9. They raised the United States flag in the plaza (later, Portsmouth Square), and the ship's guns fired a national salute. Most of the male population (foreigners and Mexicans) of the 500-person village attended the ceremony although there was no Mexican official present to offer a surrender. A twenty-four-man detail, led by Lt. H.B. Watson, USMC, remained on shore and converted the adobe custom house to a barracks. Also on that day, Lt. Jonathan S. Misroon, USN, led a small detachment the three miles to the Presidio and its castillo. At the latter, which the Americans called "the fort," he inspected the guns that

12. Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856, From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. xvii.

Fremont had spiked:

Calling on our way at the Presidio, where I had understood that one or more cannon were mounted; no cannon, however, were found there, and it is certain that they have been lately removed; nor were there any of the usual residents there.

At the castillo he saw "three brass guns (12s and 18s [pounders] old Sp. pieces made in 1623 [1673] 1628 & 1693, besides three long iron 42s, and 4 smaller guns." Misroon raised the American flag over the castillo before returning to Yerba Buena. Joseph Downey, a sailor in Misroon's party, also described the castillo, "The Old fort at the mouth of the Harbor, was in a ruinous state, but there were in it some valuable pieces of ordnance, (which however were most unfortunately all spiked) that only required drilling out and remounting to be very formidable. We could, at a very small outlay of Labor, have repaired the Old Fort, but to man it would require more men than we could spare."¹³

In the days following the occupation Montgomery's forces erected a battery of five guns in Yerba Buena. It was sited on a steep bluff where Battery Street and Broadway would later intersect. An early San Francisco newspaper later recounted, "the guns from the old fort, which had been spiked by the Fremont party, were to be brought up, drilled out, and constitute the armament . . . boats under the charge of Dave Bruce, the sail maker, were ordered to dismount the guns at the fort and bring them to the landing." Troops named the new work "Fort Montgomery" in honor of the *Portsmouth's* captain.¹⁴

Affairs at Yerba Buena remained calm through the summer and fall of 1846. Stockton appointed Lt. Washington A. Bartlett, USN, the first American alcalde (mayor) of the village. He changed the name of the settlement to San Francisco in January 1847. General Kearny, traveling on *Cyane*, visited in February. A citizen, Edwin Bryant, accompanied the general on a ride out to the Presidio. He described it as consisting "of several blocks of adobe buildings, covered with tiles. The walls of most of the buildings

13. Grivas, *Military Governments*, pp. 50-55, 75, 78, and 100; Rogers, "Fort Point;" Malcolm Edwards, editor, *The California Diary of General E.D. Townsend* (n.p., Ward Ritchie Press, 1970), p. 76; Joseph T. Downey, *The Cruise of the Portsmouth, 1845-1847*, ed. Howard Lamar (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 134.

14. Oscar Lewis, compiler and editor, *This was San Francisco* (New York: David McKay, 1962), p. 45; Henry G. Carlisle, *San Francisco Street Names, Sketches of the Lives of Pioneers for whom San Francisco Streets are named* ([San Francisco] 1954), "Battery Street;" Rand Richards, *Historic San Francisco, A Concise History and Guide* (San Francisco: Heritage House, 1991), p. 288. Other sources state that three guns were brought from the castillo and two others came from Sonoma. See Lawrence Kinnaird, "History of the Golden Gate and its Headlands" (MS, typescript, 1962 and 1967), p. 185.

are crumbling for the want of care in protecting them from the annual rains." Continuing on, the party came to the old castillo:

The fort is erected upon a commanding position, about a mile and a half from the entrance to the bay. Its walls are substantially constructed of burnt brick, and are of sufficient thickness and strength to resist heavy battering.

There are nine or ten embrasures. Like every thing else in the country belonging to the public, the fort is fast falling into ruins. There has been no garrison here for several years; the guns are dismounted, and half decomposed by exposure to the weather, and from want of care. Some of them have sunk into the ground.

General Kearny, back at his headquarters at Monterey, wrote in a more positive note:

I have directed the old Spanish fort at the entrance of the bay of San Francisco to be put in good order, and guns to be mounted there; it will be a barbette battery. Its position is a highly important one, as no vessel can enter without passing under its guns, the distance from it to the shore being less than one mile; the work will cost but a few thousand dollars.¹⁵

In August 1846 a ship from New York brought fifty migrating Mormon families (230 men, women, and children) to the port; they were utterly disappointed to learn that California was American territory. Captain Phelps boarded the vessel to see the newcomers, "They appeared to belong to the middling class of people – mostly mechanics and farmers." Some of the local inhabitants voiced intense curiosity about the new arrivals. Stories of polygamy had led to an image that Mormons "were a wild, desperate people." But when they boarded *Plymouth* to attend a church service, a ship's gunner growled, "Damnation! Why they are just like other women."¹⁶

15. Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California* (Microfilm, New Haven: Research Publications, 1975), p. 429; Brig. Gen. S.W. Kearny, March 15, 1847, to the Adjutant General, U.S. Army, in U.S. Congress, House Executive Document 17, "California and New Mexico," 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1849, p. 285.

16. Grivas, *Military Governments*, p. 174, citing *The California Star*, January 13, 1847; Busch, *Fremont's Private Navy*, p. 43. These immigrants are not to be confused with the Mormon Battalion that arrived at San Diego in January 1847.

E. New York Volunteers

At the beginning of the war with Mexico, the U.S. Congress authorized the raising of 50,000 volunteers to serve for twelve months or for the duration of the war. It also authorized President James K. Polk to apportion field, staff, and general officers for the volunteers among the states.¹⁷ In New York, as elsewhere, the state began the formation of the volunteer units. Sect. of War William L. Marcy directed Jonathan D. Stevenson, New York City, to organize and command the 7th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment.¹⁸

A number of officers appointed to the regiment were Regular Army men who had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. Among these was James A. Hardie, a second lieutenant at the beginning of the war and who was promoted to temporary major in the volunteers. He had graduated from West Point in 1843 and joined the 1st Artillery Regiment. At the Presidio of San Francisco, Hardie became its first American post commander.¹⁹

Other West Point graduates assigned to the regiment included Colonel Stevenson's son, Matthew Rider,

17. Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 183. Field officers - major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. Staff officers - quartermaster, commissary, surgeon, adjutant, etc. General officers - brigadier general, major general, lieutenant general, and general. Company officers - lieutenant and captain.

18. Jonathan D. Stevenson, Democratic politician, militia officer, and former member of the state legislature, was an energetic, strong-willed, leader with a reputation for imposing discipline. In 1846 he was a widower with several children. He married again in California in 1851. Once in California he served as commandant for the southern California district with his headquarters at Los Angeles. After the war he lived in San Francisco dealing in real estate and, later, a U.S. shipping commissioner. Bancroft, *California*, 5: 500 and 734. Although nominally an infantry regiment, the 7th Regiment, New York Volunteers was organized along legionary lines, as the entire U.S. Army had been in 1792. Inspired by the organization of the Roman legions of antiquity, this meant that the regiment included not only infantry but cavalry and artillery. In New York it was known variously as the New York Legion, Stevenson's New York Volunteers, the California Guard, and the California Regiment. Early in 1848 when the regiment was in California, the War Department redesignated the 7th as the 1st New York Volunteers. Another unique feature of Stevenson's regiment was that from its inception it was intended to be a colonization regiment, its soldiers to be mustered out and settled in California, and special emphasis was placed on recruiting skilled tradesmen. Brooke Nihart, "A New York Regiment in California, 1846-1848," *Military Collector & Historian*, 21 (Spring 1969): 1-11.

19. When he returned to the regulars in 1848, Hardie became a member of the 3d Artillery Regiment and remained at the Presidio for a time. During the Civil War he rose to the rank of brigadier general, again in the volunteers, and as an inspector general in the Regular Army. He died on active duty in 1876 with the rank of colonel. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, 1789-1903*, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1.

Henry S. Burton, Joseph L. Folsom, and John E. Brackett. In addition to the line officers were the Rev. Thaddeus M. Leavenworth, chaplain; and three surgeons: Alexander Perry, Robert Murray, and William C. Parker. Samuel W. Haight became sutler (trader).

The Army mustered in the regiment on August 1 on Governors Island in New York Harbor. The ten companies trained at their new profession during the summer of 1846. Stevenson formed a regimental band and the City of New York presented a full set of regimental colors. The soldiers appear to have been proud of their uniforms that Major Hardie designed pantaloons of dark, mixed gray with a scarlet stripe on the seam of the leg, blue coats with scarlet trimmings, and a "new" style of French cap. In September the first segment of troops boarded three ships, *Thomas H. Perkins*, *Susan Drew*, and *Loo Choo*. The balance of the regiment did not sail until later aboard *Brutus*, *Isabella*, and *Sweden*. Also sailing in September U.S. Storeship *Lexington* carried Company F, 3d Artillery, heading also for California. Two of its young officers would rise to fame: Lt. William Tecumseh Sherman and Lt. E.O.C. Ord. Also on board, Lt. Henry W. Halleck, Engineer Corps, would return to California as a major general.

An enlisted man assigned to the regiment, James Lynch, wrote his reminiscences many years later when a California resident. He boarded *Thomas H. Perkins* on which Colonel Stevenson had taken passage. Lynch recalled some incidents concerning the long voyage. At first everyone on board became seasick. The ship reached Rio de Janeiro on November 20. The quartermaster sergeant's wife gave birth. Another woman died. And so on. The ship reached San Francisco Bay on March 5, 1847. Both *Susan Drew* and *Loo Choo* arrived later the same month.²⁰

Private Lynch described the regiment's arrival. It marched the three miles to the Presidio, "where we found the old Mexican barracks in rather a dilapidated condition; but in a few days we made quite a change in it, and were the first to hoist the Stars and Stripes over that old Mexican post. We settled down to drill, guard, and police duty." He added, "While we were quartered at the Presidio, John C. Fremont came to visit our commander. He was the first man I ever saw with his hair parted in the middle."

Stevenson informed General Kearny that the command was hard at work repairing Presidio structures,

20. Francis D. Clark, *The First Regiment of New York Volunteers commanded by Col. Jonathan D. Stevenson in the Mexican War* (New York: Geo. S. Evans, 1882), pp. 11-23 and 49-52; James Lynch, *With Stevenson to California, 1846* (microfilm, New Haven: Research Publications, 1975), pp. 6-7 and 12-18.

constructing kitchens, and improving the trail to Yerba Buena. Col. Richard Mason at Monterey took a more critical stance:

It is found impossible to get much work out of the volunteers; and all that I can now expect of the two companies of Major Hardie's command will be to improve their quarters. . . . This they are at present engaged upon, using lumber made at the horse saw-mill, under direction of assistant quartermaster, Captain Folsom.

The mill is placed in the timber known as the Red Woods, near the mission of San Rafael, on the west and north side of the bay, where any amount may be had.²¹

The Presidio's first "Post Return," prepared at the end of March 1847, included statistical data for the War Department's files. Rather than stating that the regiment had arrived at the Presidio, it said that a detachment of the regiment was at San Francisco, California. This information showed that the name of the town had changed from Yerba Buena to San Francisco (January 1847), that only a part of the regiment had yet arrived (seven of the ten companies), and that the War Department had not yet published orders giving the post a name. Of the twenty-eight officers present, three were sick and three were under arrest. The number of enlisted men present came to 384.²²

In April the companies dispersed throughout California. Colonel Stevenson embarked with four companies for Monterey on April 3, and Capt. John E. Brackett led his Company C to Sonoma on April 2. That left Companies H and K at the Presidio under the command of Major Hardie. Capt. John B. Frisbie commanded Company H and Capt. Kimball H. Dimmick, Company K. On April 17 Hardie

21. Lynch, *With Stevenson*, pp. 20-21; Col. R.B. Mason, October 7, 1847, to the Adjutant General, USA, in House Executive Document 17, p. 356. Mason commanded the Tenth Military District.

22. Post Returns, Presidio of San Francisco, March 1847, Roll 967, Microcopy 617, NA.

Statistics concerning the regiment, 1846-1848:

mustered in at New York, August 1846		38 officers, 729 men
joined later	188 men	
officers resigned		6
men discharged		136
died	33	
killed in action (Indians)		2
killed in accident (at Los Angeles)		7
wounded in accident	2	
deserted		323
mustered out in California		39 officers, 658 men

Bancroft, *California*, 5: 517.

received a reinforcement of three officers and forty-seven men. At the end of the month the command consisted of seven officers and 118 men. From then until the volunteers mustered out in 1848, the Presidio's strength varied from six to eight officers and from seventy-five to 110 men.

Company H had been raised at Albany, New York, under Captain Frisbie. His two junior officers, Lieutenants Edward Gilbert and John S. Day, also served at the Presidio. Norwich, New York, raised Company K and Captain Dimmick was assisted by Lieutenants John S. Norris, George C. Hubbard, and Roderick N. Morrison. Also at San Francisco, Capt. Joseph L. Folsom, the regimental quartermaster and commissary (supplies and food), maintained his office and living quarters in the town, appearing on the post returns only for accounting purposes.²³

Of these officers only Hardie and Folsom had careers in the Regular Army. Folsom had graduated from West Point in 1840 as an infantry officer. Promoted to captain just before coming to California, he remained in that grade and in the Bay Area until his death in 1855, well after the volunteers had mustered out. Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny designated San Francisco to be the principal supply depot for the Pacific Coast with Folsom in charge. Upon his arrival he organized this first depot. He rented two storehouses and an office in the town, while soldiers and canvas protected large amounts of army supplies on the waterfront. With the coming of the gold rush, San Francisco eventually became too expensive for the Army and the depot moved to Benicia in April 1849. In addition to his military duties, Captain Folsom invested in California real estate, as did many other officers. On one occasion he urged Capt. William Tecumseh Sherman, the Army's adjutant general in California, to purchase some San Francisco lots. Sherman refused to invest his money "in such a horrid place." Folsom, while remaining on active duty, continued to invest and became a rich man. Eventually he purchased the estate of the pioneer merchant William Leidsdorff and became one of the wealthiest men in California. He died young, age thirty-eight, at the Mission San Jose. At one point in his San Francisco career, Folsom penned a description of the old Spanish works:

The old fort, at the narrows, was built and has guns mounted upon it for the last seventy or eighty years [1767-1777], it being the only work commanding the entrance to the bay.

The presidio or barracks hard by were built thirty five years since [1812, an earthquake

23. Donald C. Biggs, *Conquer and Colonize, Stevenson's Regiment and California* (San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1977), pp. 56-74; Bancroft, *California*, 5:504n and 513.

year], by the Mexican soldiery, and have been occupied by a Mexican garrison for upwards of thirty years, they being the only quarters for troops on this side of the bay. It is but four or five years since the military commandant resided here; and, even at this moment, one or more old Mexican soldiers continue to reside there.²⁴

Stevenson's regiment underwent a name change in November 1847, from the 7th New York to the 1st New York. (Another 1st New York served deep in Mexico; it became the 2d.)

Captain Dimmick maintained a diary while at the Presidio. Some of his entries offer an insight to the daily routine at the post:

Saturday, April 22, 1848. "Been sick all day with the teeth ache and taken calomel, etc."

Sunday, April 23. "This morning Dr. [William C.] Parker attempted to pull two teeth and broke them both off well down out of sight in the gumb."

April 25. "W.A. Leidsdorff gave a Ball all the officers attended except myself."

May 1. "Maj. Hardie took room at the Presidio and assumed the command of the Northern Military District of California." [Parallel to Colonel Stevenson's command of the southern district. Hardie turned over command of the post to Captain Frisbie.]

May 2. "Went to the town of San Francisco. . . . Duels & rumors of Duels are the orders of the Day."

May 3. "Orders received from Monterey for Capt. Brackett with C Company to embark on the Bark Anita together with Maj. Hardie and proceed to San Jose in lower California." [Temporary duty. Company C continued to be assigned to Sonoma.]

24. Heitman, *Historical Register*, Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Sherman, Soldier, Realist, American* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1958), p. 24: "History of the San Francisco Depot," General Correspondence File, 1922-1935, Office of the Quartermaster General (hereinafter cited as OQMG), RG 92 NA; Bancroft, *California*, 3:742; Biggs, *Conquer and Colonize*, p. 98, records that Lieutenant Gilbert and twenty-seven men maintained a guard over the quartermaster and ordnance supplies. Folsom, June 6, 1847, in House Executive Document 17, p. 178. Folsom also had the important responsibility of being collector of customs at San Francisco.

May 7. "Detailed to take charge of the working party to repair the old Fort and mount the Guns in Battery."²⁵

May 8. "Dr Parker took quarters with me in my room."

May 9. "Worked on the road between the fort and Presidio."

May 16. "Lieut [William H.] Warner is commence the survey of the military reserve on which stands this presidio."

May 17. "Myself Dr. Parker made arrangements to pay Lt. [George C.] Hubbards debts which amount to \$250 more than his pay due from government. He agrees to not drink or Spree it any more while in the Service."

May 18. "This morning died Capt. Leidsdorff."

May 19. "The funeral of Capt. Leidsdorff to take place at the Mission of Dolores." "A salute of Guns were fired at the Presidio by order of Capt [Frisbie] rather out of character."

May 21. "Received news from Monterey that the president [Polk] of the U.S. has been impeached. It is not believed."

May 22. "Commenced work again on the fort."

May 23. "Worked upon the Fort all day."

May 28. "Last night about 18 men deserted for the purpose of working in the gold mines none of them from my company."

25. The regiment brought thirty cannon to California, of which at least six ended up at the Presidio. Despite Dimmick's optimism, the volunteers did not succeed in mounting guns in the castillo. House Executive Document 17, pp. 338, 356, and 601.

June 2. "Rode down the coast about a mile below the Seal Rocks. Saw a whale nearly whole washed on shore by a recent gale."

June 3. "Working party on the Fort broke up."

June 5. "Capt. Frisbie with one officer 2 non com Officer and eight men went to Sacramento in pursuit of deserters, Lieut Hubbard in arrest for disobedience of Frisbies orders."

June 8. "Maj. Hardie arrived from Sonoma and published orders assigning the command of this Post to my charge."

June 11. "Capt [John E.] Brackett arrived with his company [C] from Sonoma – had but 23 men the others deserted and went to the gold mines."

June 17. "Arrested 10 deserters from Co. C and confined them in the Guard House."

June 21. "Gov [Richard B.] Mason arrived from Monterey."

June 23. "Two men – Ruggles & Rodrian were flogged for Desertion."²⁶

June 25. "Received two letters from home – one from E.B. Dimmick and the other from my mother. Joy. Joy. Joy."

June 27. "Walked from the Presidio to the City and Back again."

June 28. "Countersign Harrison."

26. Punishments before the Civil War included the lash, confinement to a black hole, branding with a hot iron, cropping an ear, marking with indelible pen, ducking in water, standing in or on a barrel for hours, marching with weights in a circle, wearing a ball and chain, and arms bound around knees with a stick in between (bucked and gagged). Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army, A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 24 and 197; Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue, The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 38-39.

June 29. "Maj. Jim Hardie assumed command of this post and government horses for his Spanish [w]hores to ride out to see him."

July 1. "Visited the town in forenoon. Killed a coyota at Wilsons on my way."

July 4. "Federal Salute at Sunrise & National Salute at noon."

July 10. "Sent my quarterly ordnance report to Washington and wrote to Col Stevenson appointing T O'Neil a corporal in my company."

July 22. "Went out hunting. Shot four quail and two Rabits."

July 26. "Wrote my 29th letter to my wife."

July 29. "Wrote to town. bought cloth for one pair pants. Heard that Capt Bracket had resigned."

July 30. "Maj. Hardie goes every Sabbath to the Heathen Catholic Church. He is now called by the soldiers the "Pious Papist.""²⁷

August 1. "Twelve Deserters flogged 49 lashes each. Capt Frisbie compy left the Presidio." [to Sonoma]

August 10. "Glorious News of Peace received and an order to discharge the 1st N.Y. Regt."

August 14. "Prepared my muster Rolls preparatory to being mustered from the U.S. Service."

August 15. "This day at 10 a.m. my company was discharged the service."

August 17. "My baggage was moved from the Presidio to San Francisco."

27. In March 1848 Hardie journeyed to Oregon Territory in an attempt to enlist 800 volunteers for the occupation of Baja California and Mazatlan. He had absolutely no luck. On this trip, however, Hardie, who had been raised as an Episcopalian, converted to Catholicism. Mason, April 2, 1848, in House Executive Document 17, p. 464; Anon, *Memoir of James A. Hardie*, p. 15.

August 24. "My company was paid off by Maj Rich and no allowance for travelling expenses."²⁸

September 18. "Took my baggage on board the Sloop bound up the Sacramento."

September 20. "Arrived at Suttors Fort at 2 p.m."

September 26. "Sold goods all day to Indians & Spaniards."²⁹

During August 1848 Major Hardie mustered out the three companies: C and K on August 15 and H from Sonoma on August 25. Other units also mustered out that month at Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Monterey. The regiment had served well on the far frontier during the war with Mexico, not as fighting men but as soldiers of the occupation. Most of the complement remained in California during the heady days of the gold rush and beyond. Some became desperadoes in the booming city of San Francisco; others became distinguished citizens in California. In their various ways they participated in the creation of a new state for the Union.

F. The Regular Army and the Presidio

Even before the volunteers returned to civilian life, Governor Mason at Monterey wrote, "Two companies of regulars, every day diminished by desertions that cannot be prevented, will soon be the only military force in California; and they will be of necessity compelled to remain in San Francisco and Monterey to guard the large deposits of powder and munitions of war, which cannot be removed." He said that enlisted men got only \$7 a month while they could earn \$10-20 a day at the mines.³⁰

28. This should not have been a surprise. When organized in New York, the regiment learned there would be no allowances for travel after discharge. The Army regarded these volunteers as future California settlers as well as soldiers. Later, the Army relented and authorized travel costs. Only a few men accepted. House Executive Document 17.

29. Capt. Kimball Dimmick, *Diary*, MS, California Historical Society, San Francisco; Anon, *Memoir of James A. Hardie*, p. 15.

30. Grivas, *Military Governments*, pp. 126-129, quoting Mason, August 19, 1848. Even Mason's cook left for the mines and California's governor had to prepare his own meals.

When Hardie mustered out the last of the volunteers, he received the first of their replacements, a detachment of twenty men of the 1st U.S. Dragoon Regiment who came from army headquarters at Monterey. Their commander, Lt. George Stoneman, helped Hardie hold the tiny command together even while the men attempted to head for the mines.³¹

In October Hardie himself was mustered out of the volunteers. He remained the commanding officer of the Presidio, but now as a lieutenant in the 3d U.S. Artillery Regiment. The Presidio's strength that month amounted to four officers and thirteen dragoons. Colonel Mason, pleased with Hardie's wartime performance, wrote that he "has effectually aided the civil authorities, dispelled the fears of the threatened Indian incursions, and guarded the heavy depot at San Francisco – duties which were performed to the best advantage with the limited force at his command."³²

The dragoons continued to man the post until May 1848. In January, however, Dragoon Capt. Andrew Jackson "Whiskey" Smith replaced Hardie as commander when Smith and his Company C arrived from Los Angeles. On May 1 the dragoons departed the Presidio and in their place came Capt. Erasmus D. Keyes and his Company M, 3d Artillery Regiment. This organization became the first of the artillery regiments to serve at the Presidio for the next sixty-three years, until the establishment of Fort Winfield Scott, an artillery post in the western portion of the military reservation, in 1912.³³

In the two years since the war with Mexico began, the Army had established a military government in Alta, California and an army garrison had occupied the ancient Presidio adjacent to rapidly-growing San Francisco, already the most important place in the former province. In the coming decade, Captain Keyes and dedicated officers like him would begin the process of establishing the Presidio, along with Alcatraz Island, as the primary source of strength for the defense of San Francisco Bay.

31. George Stoneman also rose to fame in the Civil War. In the 1880s he served as governor of California. In World War II Camp Stoneman, east of San Francisco, served the Port of Embarkation as a personnel replacement center.

The 1st Regiment of Dragoons originated in 1833 as "an elite mounted unit composed of native-born Americans of special size and riding ability." In 1861 its designation changed to the 1st Cavalry Regiment.

32. Mason, December 27, 1848, in House Executive Document 17, p. 651.

33. The 3d Regiment of Artillery was first organized in 1812. It consisted of two battalions each having ten companies. In 1814 it consolidated with the 1st and 2d Regiments to form the Corps of Artillery. Then, in 1821, it reorganized as the 3d Regiment again. Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:51-57; Post Returns, 1848-1849.